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WHA Press Guidance
April 10, 2002

VENEZUELA: DISRUPTION OF OIL SUPPLIES

Q: Is the general strike in Venezuela raising concerns about a disruption in oil supplies to the U.S. from Venezuela?

A: WE ARE WATCHING THE GENERAL STRIKE IN VENEZUELA, WHICH IS ENTERING ITS SECOND DAY, VERY CLOSELY. THE OPERATIONS OF THE VENEZUELAN STATE OIL COMPANY (PDVSA) HAVE BEEN SLOWED DOWN, BUT AS OF YET, WE DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION TO ASSESS THE EFFECT THIS STRIKE MAY HAVE ON VENEZUELA'S OIL EXPORTS TO THE UNITED STATES AND ARE SEEKING FURTHER DETAILS. VENEZUELAN OIL SHIPMENTS USUALLY TAKE SEVERAL DAYS TO REACH THE U.S., AND VENEZUELAN OIL INVENTORIES ARE BELIEVED TO BE AMPLE. THE POTENTIAL LONGER-TERM IMPACT OF THIS STRIKE DEPENDS ON MANY FACTORS, AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE SITUATION CLOSELY.